

# TRANSFORMING THE REVOLUTION

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THE WORLD-SYSTEM

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# MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

## BUILDING DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IN BRAZIL

Maria Helena Moreira Alves

## CUBA: A LEFT U.S. VIEW

Paul M. Sweezy

## RACISM IN ACADEMIA

Anthony M. Platt

## The American Witchhunt As Belfrage Saw It

Annette T. Rubinstein

VOL. 42

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

For several years now, we have been calling attention to a tendency for the unchallenged U.S. hegemony in the capitalist world that emerged during and right after the Second World War to weaken and give way to a new pattern of power relations. By this time last year, this tendency had begun to take on the dimensions of a *fait accompli*. In our Review of the Month for October 1989, we felt justified in predicting without qualification that the "1990s will witness the disintegration of the worldwide U.S. empire and its probable replacement by a system of competing trade-and-currency blocs."

Since then the pace of change has enormously quickened under the impact of the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe and the resultant collapse of the Communist-led regimes in that area. West Germany, already the strongest European capitalist power, seized the initiative, overwhelmed relatively weak forces favoring independence in East Germany, and suddenly presented the world with the imminent reality of a reborn Greater Germany. Gorbachev, the consummate *Realpolitiker*, bowing to the inevitable, elected to make the best deal he could with West Germany, thus in effect applying for a position as junior partner in the newly emerging German-dominated

(Continued on inside back cover)

(Continued from inside front cover)

European empire. Whether this application will be accepted and if so with what consequences are questions that only time will answer. In the meantime the new shape of global politics was dramatically illuminated at the economic summit meeting of the advanced capitalist countries that met in Houston in July. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, observing the proceedings from the privileged position of an interested insider, summed up what was most essential with admirable conciseness: "There are three regional groups at this summit, one based on the dollar, one based on the yen, and one based on the deutsche mark." (*New York Times*, July 2) If we add that the latter two currencies are very strong, supported by huge trade surpluses, while the first is weak, suffering from an equally impressive trade deficit, we can understand why the *Times* (ibid) could report that "Robert Hormats, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International, the investment firm, who has worked on or observed dozens of meetings like this one, sees some dangers in the evolving regional pattern. 'What you get is the Germans leading on aid to the Soviets and the Japanese leading on aid to China,' he said here this week, 'both of them came to Houston, told the United States what they planned to do, and told us to take it or leave it.'" It looks as though it won't be the last time the United States will be offered this unaccustomed choice.

We record with sorrow the deaths of two long-time friends of MR, both at age 85. (1) Cedric Belfrage died after a long illness on June 20th at his home in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he had lived with his wife Mary since 1963. Cedric was a co-founder, along with the late Jim Aronson and Jack McMannus, of the *National Guardian* (later the *Guardian*) in the autumn of 1948, just six months before *Monthly Review* was founded. He was a prototypical victim of McCarthyism—deported to his native Britain in 1955 for what W.E.B. DuBois at the time called his "real crime," i.e., "editing our one radical newspaper." In his Mexican years Cedric became a virtuoso translator of Spanish to English, his best known work being books of Eduardo Galeano (notably *Open Veins of Latin America*, Monthly Review Press, 1973). (2) Max Blatt died of cancer in New York on July 5th. A retired teacher of social studies (Midwood High School, Brooklyn), Max was an inspiration to generations of young people who remember him with the love and gratitude that are the highest reward of a great teacher and human being. Max's unique contribution to MR was the planning and compilation of a detailed 166-page index of the magazine's first 32 years (1949-1981), which was published by MR Press as a separate volume in 1982. It proved to be a difficult and arduous task. Hardly a month passes without our finding it an invaluable editorial tool. With another decade of publication coming to an end, we would love to be able to bring the index up to date. Any volunteers out there?

Several readers have called our attention to a serious error in the chart ("Net Capital Stock in Manufacturing and Finance: 1948-1988") on p. 9 of the June issue of MR. The top two lines of that chart should be interchanged, that for "all manufacturing industries" of course being above that for "manufacturing less electronic and instrument industries." On investigation, it turned out that the error was committed by the drafterperson who prepared the chart for the printer—which naturally does not mean that we shouldn't have caught it.

The memorial service for Bobby Ortiz signalled on p. 4 of the July-August issue will be held at the Community Church, 40 E. 30th St. in Manhattan, on Sunday October 28th at 4 p.m.



resilience in living with trouble, provided that no organization arose which might be able to take power. Production of devices for physically crushing and cavedropping on heretics shaped up into a new billion-dollar business.

*The American Inquisition* presents a cogent and original interpretation of the long Cold War in terms of its effect in the United States, with revealing glimpses of many well known participants and offers illuminating incidental references to some 20 left organizations of the period. In addition it affords an enormous amount of accessible information as to specific attitudes, actions, and fortunes of a large number of radicals, important in the "old left," whose very existence will come as a surprise to most of their successors. Survivors will find a special value in seeing those events with which they were most painfully and personally familiar placed in the whole picture—frequently an entire "who, what, where, when, why" is telescoped in a seemingly effortless footnote. Whether or not time has validated all Belfrage's political judgments, even those readers who disagree with some will find all of them stimulating and relevant.

The volume concludes with an eight page bibliography of those books on this and related subjects which had appeared between 1940 and 1961. There have, of course, been many more since. But it is still, I think, true that if one were to read only a single volume on the American witchhunt this would be the one to select.

## Cedric Belfrage

1904 - 1990

The *Guardian* staff is honored to carry on the work  
of this progressive journalist.

## BUILDING DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM: THE PARTIDO DOS TRABALHADORES IN BRAZIL

by MARIA HELENA MOREIRA ALVES

By 1978 Brazil's "economic miracle" had come to an end, and the social costs of severe income inequality were becoming unbearable. The Catholic church had moved strongly into the opposition to the military government. Progressive sectors of the church, committed to the theology of liberation, were actively organizing the poor in Basic Christian Communities, neighborhood organizations, peasant and Indian movements, and rural trade unions. Because of repressive conditions, most social movements organized quietly, in small and decentralized groups.

In April 1978, to the surprise of Brazil's military rulers, workers rebelled. Auto workers strikes, involving 140,000 metalworkers in São Paulo, the nation's most industrialized area, rapidly spread over the country and throughout the economy; within a few weeks over 500,000 workers were on strike. The strikes of 1978 had a profound impact on the working class: fear was broken. The vast civil disobedience movement succeeded both in achieving salary gains and in delegitimizing the military's anti-strike legislation. The strike movement of 1978 also established Luis Inacio (Lula) da Silva, the president of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo do

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million votes, and the *Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro*, whose candidate Mario Covas was fourth with 7.8 million votes. Lula lost the runoff to his conservative opponent, Fernando Collor de Mello. Although Collor's base was small, with the backing of national and international capital, and Brazil's largest television network, in the final count Collor won with 53 percent of the vote.

Although Lula lost the election, a labor leader, with strong socialist politics, had received 31 million votes. This result firmly established the PT not only as one of Brazil's most important political parties, with a clear hegemony on the left, but as a party with great international significance.

### Where Did the *Partido Dos Trabalhadores* Come From?

The Workers' Party arose as a direct consequence of Brazil's great economic and social inequality. In 1988, the richest 20 percent of the population appropriated two-thirds of the national income; the richest 1 percent appropriated an amount equal to that of the poorest 50 percent. In 1989, although average national income was over \$2,000 per person, in more than one-third of Brazil's families per person income was only \$180. With this pattern of inequality, malnutrition due to poverty is the leading cause of Brazil's extremely high infant mortality rate: 65 per 1000 babies born alive, a much higher rate than that of such neighbors as Venezuela (36), Argentina (33), or Uruguay (27). According to the World Health Organization, approximately 10 million Brazilians receive less than the daily minimum nutrition required for survival. Government statistics show that there are 32 million children living in absolute poverty and more than 7 million children abandoned in the streets of the cities. The PT is deeply committed to the transformation of the political and economic structures of the society which have been responsible for the growing misery of 80 percent of the Brazilian population.

The Workers' Party not only proposes to redistribute income with immediate economic reform programs, it is an organization for the *empowerment* of working people who, because of long standing patterns of discrimination and inequali-

### THE AMERICAN WITCHHUNT AS BELFRAGE SAW IT

by Annette T. Rubinstein

*The American Inquisition 1945-1960: A Profile of the "McCarthy Era"* by Cedric Belfrage. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989. 351 pp. \$13.95.

This small publishing house deserves a rousing vote of thanks for their republication of a neglected major work. When it first appeared in 1973 it was one of the earliest accounts, and by far the best, of what the author, a founding editor of *The National Guardian* (now *The Guardian*) calls the American Inquisition. Unfortunately in the original edition the print was so small that reading it proved too exhausting a labor of love for most and, perhaps at least partly for that reason, there was little notice taken of this remarkable book. It is now, happily, freshly available in an attractive readable paperback format with two interesting new introductions, one by Jessica Mitford and one by the historian William Preston. It is certainly still timely when an American president can use "liberal" as an epithet, and is still, I think, the most illuminating as well as the most readable of the many books written about the somewhat misnamed "McCarthy Era."

As Belfrage shows, this era opened long before McCarthy. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAAC) began in 1938, under the chairmanship of Martin Dies, to set the pattern McCarthy was to follow, and the Smith Act was first successfully used against antiwar political dissidents, members of the Socialist Workers Party, in 1940. (New Yorkers old enough to vote then will probably date the

Annette T. Rubinstein, a frequent contributor to *Monthly Review*, is on the boards of the New York Marxist School and *Science & Society*. Her most recent book is *American Literature: Root and Flower, 1775-1955*.



opment she describes has emerged a working class leading a political movement to create a socialist political economy based on democratic participation in economic planning and political life.

ty, have been denied democratic participation. The PT has provided the opportunity for those who are oppressed to regain a voice, to build their dignity, and to win recognition of their rights. Those who were never included when it came to decide matters of budget, of development programs, of distribution of wealth and income, of urban and rural property tenure, now find that they can participate in decision making and experience the energy which comes from collective organization. As Lula wrote in the introduction to the PT's presidential platform:

There is no future for Brazil if the energy of the people (and the joy which comes with it) cannot be freely expressed. If I was asked to summarize in one sentence the meaning of our program I would say: we mean to reorganize Brazilian society, giving the leading role to those who live in the world of work. It is a radical proposal: teachers, workers, doctors, artists, men and women of the countryside, writers, rubber tree tappers, journalists, fishermen, small businessmen, engineers and all other people who, like those above, construct the present with their work. For them must we build the future. We cannot imagine Brazil without them and we do not want a Brazil which is against them. This is the great message of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*.

The roots of the PT are not only socio-economic. The PT's political strategy has been built upon the accumulated historical experience of the working class movement in Brazil, especially a critique of the legacy of Getulio Vargas's populism and the legacy of the Brazilian Communist Party.

Getulio Vargas first took power in Brazil in 1938, after a military coup that instituted the authoritarian and corporatist *Estado Novo* (New State). Vargas, a charismatic leader who admired Benito Mussolini, copied Brazil's 1945 Labor Code from Mussolini's *Carta del Lavoro*. The Labor Code's corporatist measures tied trade unions to the state, allowing the Ministry of Labor to recognize trade unions, dissolve them, intervene in elections, remove officials from union posts, and control all matters pertaining to finances, budget, and bargaining rights.

The Labor Code also prohibited horizontal organization of workers in a central federation. The entire structure was meant to prevent the class consciousness of workers by connect-

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ing civil society's organizations to the state in a corporatist pyramid. During the period from the overthrow of Vargas in 1946 to the military coup of 1964, Brazil's formally democratic governments did not strictly enforce the Labor Code, and workers organized in a climate of relative flexibility as populist governments sought working class support for their policies. However, the Labor Code itself was never repealed. After 1964, the military government applied in full all the Labor Code's restrictions on organizing: controlling union budgets, decertifying many unions, and removing from office all trade union officials who did not comply with the policies imposed by the military.

After the overthrow of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, Vargas continued to play an important role in Brazil as a populist leader who founded the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB). The PTB mediated working class demands and provided a political mechanism to mobilize workers around specific populist leaders and reform programs. The party was connected to state-controlled trade unions, and unionists were regularly co-opted into agencies to collaborate with government policies. The main characteristic of the PTB was that of a *mobilizing*, rather than an *organizing*, political party, mobilizing workers to elect charismatic populist leaders and to support their policies rather than building autonomous political organizations of workers and promoting class consciousness. Within the general framework of populist politics there was little role for the working class as an *autonomous* political actor.

The working class leaders who founded the PT in 1979 were very aware of the dangers of this legacy of corporatism, co-optation, and clientelism. Their political experience was rooted in organizational activities in the context of the strictly government-controlled unions set up under Vargas's Labor Code. Working class movements after 1964 had organized union opposition groups to fight government-appointed union bureaucrats and sought an alternative form of rank-and-file organization in the workplace. Much of the Catholic church, in reaction to the economic and social inequalities and to the repression, had moved into the opposition and organized working people in neighborhood associations, mothers' clubs,

industries in new industrial cities, as mandated by government plan, helped strengthen workers' capacity for association and class struggle.

This new alliance of workers and other activists, although organizationally weak and politically unfocused, threatened the South Korean political economy. In an attempt to stop its development, General Chun Doo Whan seized power in a bloody coup and had himself declared president in 1980. In reaction, by the mid-1980s, an explicitly left movement had emerged, openly challenging the liberal opposition, the ruling party, and the country's monopoly-dominated system. This political movement, now maturing rapidly, has working-class leadership and clear organizational form: the National Democratic Federation unites the democratic labor movement with a broad spectrum of progressive forces including groups of religious activists, artists, and intellectuals, and mass organizations of farmers, the urban poor, and women.

In spite of intense government repression, this movement has achieved considerable success. One indication that the elite takes this movement seriously: the *Asian Wall Street Journal* reports that the government is launching "a think tank aimed at promoting capitalism, in response to what it views as growing support for leftist ideologies on campuses and workplaces. . . . [An Economic Board Official noted that] opposition groups have provided extensive education on socialism or communism to blue-collar workers, farmers and students since the 1970s." (10 July 1989)

Economic obstacles to continued growth compound political tensions. First, South Korea's export-led economy is increasingly dependent on access to the U.S. market and a favorable exchange rate—both problematic conditions. Secondly, South Korea's *chaebol*, having expanded rapidly into a number of product markets on the basis of foreign technology, are in danger of losing market share due to even lower wages in some countries and to the unwillingness of firms in developed capitalist countries to continue to share advanced technology. Finally, strikes resulting from the *chaebol's* exploitative labor policies have seriously disrupted production of leading exports, especially automobiles.

I make no predictions here about South Korea's future; I have tried to demonstrate only that contradictions and class struggle are part of the South Korean experience. To ignore them, as Amnsden does, seriously impairs our ability to understand that experience. Amnsden's book is a valuable contribution to the literature on South Korea; but remember while reading it that from the capitalist devel-



also through the creation of a low-cost industrial labor force. In the countryside, a brutal agricultural policy ruined many farms and forced farmers to migrate to the cities for industrial work. Farmers continue to be sacrificed as the government allows increasing imports of agricultural products in order to keep U.S. markets open for South Korean manufacturers. As a result, growing numbers of farmers are organizing to oppose the country's export-led model of development, U.S. domination, and lack of democracy.

A majority of the early rural migrants were young women who found jobs in the first export industries known as "female industries" (apparel, textiles, shoes, wigs, and electronics) upon which the economy was heavily dependent. In order to survive and send money to their rural families, these women worked long hours in unsafe conditions and often were dismissed after only a few years of employment. These circumstances led many into prostitution, especially near U.S. military bases. Conditions for women workers have changed little from the early days of industrialization. While manufacturing workers in general have the lowest average wages of any sector, workers in the crucial "female industries" have the lowest of all. Not surprisingly, then, women also are organizing within trade unions and women's groups.

The rural-urban migration (especially into Seoul) helped to create a movement of urban poor in the early 1970s which became more militant in the 1980s. Although this movement is less organized than those mentioned above, its strongest groups also seek radical change in the country's economic and political structures and relationship to the United States.

All of these movements were set into motion by the South Korean growth process itself. By 1972 they, along with student and church activists demonstrating for political democracy, created serious problems for the government. Ex-general and president, Park Chung Hee, responded by imposing martial law and the heavy-handed rule of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

Unable to force the government to moderate its harsh policies by peaceful acts of resistance, many student and church activists began to realize that their efforts would achieve little if disconnected from the demands and struggles of workers who, while making the economy run, were also its victims. Over the decade of the 1970s these activists increasingly supported the workers' movement and, as a result, began to broaden their understanding of democracy to include empowerment of working people. At the same time, the establishment of heavy

and Basic Christian Communities. Peasants were meeting quietly and learning to defend their right to land as well as win better conditions for agricultural laborers. All of the many social movements in Brazil had in common a deep commitment to popular *empowerment* through the exercise of leadership and collective decision-making. In addition, a search for autonomy of organization was perhaps the key ingredient that united all groups of working class opposition to the military governments after 1964.\*

From this historical perspective, these trade unionists and community organizers consciously wished to avoid founding a party based on a populist framework, and intended to move the working class from a position of backstage mobilizing to frontline organizing as *independent major political actors*. This position of autonomy and empowerment was, perhaps, best expressed in an exchange that took place in 1979 between Lula and Brizola. Brizola, the most important inheritor of the populist legacy in Brazil, was attempting to convince Lula to join his effort to reestablish the traditional PTB. Brizola argued, "We are reaching the river and it is necessary that we, as leaders, show the people where to cross it." Lula replied, "I think it is time that the people should learn where and how to swim by themselves." With the idea that the "people should learn where and how to swim" the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* was born.

The founders of the Workers' Party also drew on the experience of the *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (PCB). The PCB had deep roots in the working class movement since its founding in 1922 in connection with autonomous trade unions, and it became one of the leading organizers of underground resistance during the Vargas dictatorship. Because of this early history, the PCB enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy within the working class. The PCB organized mostly in a clandestine or semi-clandestine fashion from its founding days and became characterized by a top-down structure, rather rigid in its following of

\*On this point of the history of the trade union movement in Brazil and its search for autonomy, see my article "Trade Unions in Brazil: A Search for Autonomy and Organization" in Edward Epstein, ed. *Labor Autonomy and the State in Latin America* (Winchester, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, 1989).



"democratic centralism," with little room for internal debate and dissent. The Brazilian Communist Party is known as one of the most orthodox in Latin America.

After the end of Vargas's dictatorship, the PCB worked in loose and unofficial alliances in support of populist politicians. Its basic theoretical position on political action emphasized unity with the local bourgeoisie against imperialism. The PCB held strictly to this policy even after the military coup of 1964, and, within the resistance, argued for center-left unity with bourgeois sectors to overthrow the military government. This emphasis on alliances with the bourgeoisie caused a series of splits in the PCB and the loss of a significant number of its working class militants.

In 1979, at the time of the founding of the PT, the PCB argued for a soft line on strikes in order to build a secure inter-class alliance capable of overthrowing the dictatorship. Because many of the strikes deeply affected the interests of the national bourgeoisie, the PCB instructed its trade unionists to negotiate agreements with local capital in such a manner as to take advantage of what the PCB believed to be an inherent contradiction between local and international capital. This position became the subject of heated polemics within the new trade union movement, eventually leading to a new series of splits from the PCB. Some members left the party to join social democratic and populist parties; others supported the efforts to found the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*. Those members of the PCB who joined the PT did not believe in the effectiveness of an "inter-class alliance" because of the deep connection between local and international capital in Brazil. And they were frustrated by "democratic centralism" and the inability of rank-and-file militants to influence the party platform. They joined the PT to have a more active voice in decision making.

### Building the *Partido Dos Trabalhadores*

How could a mass-based, democratic and socialist party be created within the strict limitations imposed by the military state? How could the party's leaders and militants work both within and in opposition to the system?

### *Chebol and Late Industrialization*

A cornerstone of late industrialization, in Amsden's theory, is the necessity for third world countries to compete in world markets on the basis of learning (through the purchase of foreign technology) rather than invention or innovation. Amsden therefore continues her study of South Korea in Parts II and III with an examination of the organization and operation of the *chaebol*, a business form of organization that she considers well-designed for such learning. Part II is an account of how reliance on foreign technology has shaped the role of management, labor markets, and education and training of workers in South Korea. Part III maps out South Korea's non-linear path of industrial transformation, showing through a series of industry case studies that the *chaebol* did not grow according to any simple stage theory based on the neoclassical law of comparative advantage.

These sections offer valuable insights into state-business interaction, the relationship between business organization and industrial diversification/expansion, and shop-floor sources of growth and productivity. But the book loses its focus in these two parts, becoming more like a series of Harvard Business School case studies than continued analysis and evaluation of the dynamics of the South Korean political economy as a whole.

Overall, we get a picture of South Korean development as a successful trip over a rough road. Amsden mentions many of the problems and injustices encountered along the way, but they remain in the background. Yes, there was a lack of democracy, but it did enable the state to drive industrialization, and the country now is solving its political problems. Yes, big business exercises disproportionate power, but the state counteracts it by forcing the *chaebol* to operate in the national interest and share wealth with workers. Yes, workers, especially women workers, are highly exploited, but look at the heroic struggle of workers working overtime to build ships, cars, and other things. In short, Amsden's analysis omits contradictions and class conflicts. Introduce these into the picture, as I do below, and we see that development has been far rougher than Amsden admits, and now confronts the South Korean people with tough choices about the way to go in the future.

### Contradictions and Class

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the state sought to create an export-led expansion not only through financial incentives for capitalists but



areas. The decision to give a leading role in production to private instead of public enterprises apparently was not made until the early 1970s' heavy and chemical industrialization drive. As part of that decision, the government favored the rise of a small group of family-owned conglomerates called *chaebol*; the top ten *chaebol* accounted for only 15.1 percent of GNP in 1974, but over 67 percent by 1984. (p. 116)

Such favors had to be returned: individual military and government leaders were rewarded with sizable financial gain. The state, however, held the upper hand in this relationship, as the history of the Kukje group makes clear. In 1984, when Kukje was the seventh largest *chaebol*, its president refused to make a contribution to a foundation controlled by the president of South Korea. In response, government-owned commercial banks called in their loans to Kukje, forcing the company into bankruptcy, and then redistributed its assets to other *chaebol*.

This picture of a centrally planned, state-controlled economy dominated by a few large, diversified conglomerates bears little resemblance to neoclassical descriptions of economic growth led by free-market forces. As Amsden writes: "Korea is an example of a country that grew very fast and yet violated the canons of conventional wisdom . . . instead of the market mechanism allocating resources and guiding private entrepreneurship, the government made most of the pivotal investment decisions." (p. 139)

The South Korean experience strongly suggests that state control and planning of an economy is now required for industrial growth and transformation even under capitalism. It is worth emphasizing, as Amsden does in her book, that planning worked in South Korea only because the state had the power to discipline private capital if it did not make "appropriate" use of trade and financial support. The left need have no fear of the mainstream view that the free market caused South Korea's economic success—it didn't. This conclusion should also give pause to free-market advocates in Eastern Europe.

Amsden recognizes that "it is frustrating to model builders in 'backward' countries to learn that Korea's success rests heavily on a strong state. . . . It is frustrating because countries are 'backward' mostly because their state is weak." (p. 147) But, having gone so far as to recognize the need for state planning, she does not go further to consider the need for a social revolution to put state power in the hands of the populace.

The Political Party Law of 1979 established the limitations on party organization. First, the law prohibited formation of a political party based on "appeals to class, race, sex or religious beliefs." Second, the law required the registration of party members, which meant that workers were vulnerable to pressure and that the security police could easily keep tabs on party membership. Third, the law required that parties be organized from the top down, with a national executive committee selecting the members of party regional and municipal committees. There were, in addition, a variety of complicated legal requirements for holding local conventions.

Most political parties in Brazil have been molded by this legislation. They have a top-down structure in which power lies exclusively with the national executive committee. All decisions are made by the top leadership who do not even attempt to organize the rank and file. Accepting the various legal impediments, the traditional political parties exist mainly at election times and have little mobilizing power, counting on financial support to hire campaign workers during elections. They have institutionalized the patron-client relationships of Brazil's patriarchal society and serve as distributors of organized favors.

The PT has attempted to avoid this institutionalized pattern. In order to legally exist as a political party and at the same time fulfill its intent to build a mass-based democratic party, the PT developed two forms of organization. The first strictly complied with the law. The second, a parallel structure, allowed the party to institutionalize mechanisms of rank-and-file participation and to establish an organization from the bottom up. Those who can fight off political or job pressures formally register as party members. Many more people register only in internal party records but participate with equal rights in all committees, conventions, and meetings; these are the party's *militantes*. A third and even more numerous group is comprised of sympathizers who support the party, contribute financially, and largely provide the free labor for all party campaigns. Some ten years after its founding, the PT has approximately 400,000 officially registered members, slightly



over one million *milittantes*, and over four million activists or sympathizers.

The PT regularly holds local, regional, and national conventions as established by the law, with national conventions which elect members of the national executive committee which, in turn, names all other members of regional or local committees. However, these "official conventions" are only *pro forma*. In reality, the "official conventions" simply sanction decisions which are previously taken by "pre-conventions" held at local, regional, and national levels, and involving all party members whether or not they are "legally" registered.

The actual structure of the party is democratic and alive with membership participation. The PT is organized in local units called *nucleos*, in neighborhoods or workplaces: for example, the *nucleo* of the Ford Motor plant, the *nucleo* of the University of São Paulo, the *nucleo* of the *Banco do Brasil*, the *nucleo* of rubber-tree tappers of Araguaia, the *nucleo* of the district of Nova Iguaçu, of São João de Meriti, of Copacabana, and so forth, throughout the country. The flexibility of organization by place of work or residence allows broad participation in the day to day discussions of issues, national concerns, party platforms, choosing candidates, etc.

The *nucleo* organization also allows for control by the rank and file. One can only join the party at its most basic and lively level, the *nucleo*, with the approval of fellow workers or neighbors. The criterion for *nucleo* membership is militancy in social movements. The *nucleos* meet regularly, some monthly, others every week. Documents on issues of concern to the party are distributed to each *nucleo* for discussion by members. Their opinions are reflected in documents which are discussed in all local "pre-conventions." The documents that are approved by the local "pre-conventions" delegates are then taken to discussions at the regional "pre-conventions" and finally the national "pre-convention." Rank-and-file delegates are chosen in elections of each *nucleo*, in proportion to the numbers of members who belong to the *nucleo*. They vote in the municipal "pre-convention" electing the delegates to the regional "pre-convention" and in turn they elect delegates to the national "pre-

even claim that they reveal the democratic impulses inherent in capitalism and that capitalism is the choice of a free electorate.

Given South Korea's image as a model of capitalist development, it is unfortunate that so many on the left have avoided careful study of the country's economic and political experience. Have we feared that the mainstream view is true? If so, this fear testifies to the power of ideology, because most free-market explanations of South Korea's economic growth have more to do with ideology than with reality.

### The State and Development

In *Asia's Next Giant*, Amsden explains how South Korea, her classic late industrializing country, "began the twentieth century in an economically backward state based on [production of] raw materials, and dramatically raised national income per capita by selectively investing in industry." (p. v) From this specific history she tries to draw out general principles of successful third world industrialization. Amsden's main contribution is the point (developed in the first half of the book) that a strong interventionist state is key to development. She argues convincingly that South Korea began to grow rapidly and to transform its economy only after a strong leader, Park Chung Hee, took state power in a 1961 military coup, and adopted policies exactly opposite to those recommended by the U.S. government and neoclassical theory. Most significantly, the state greatly expanded its control over the economy so that its policies, rather than free-market forces, shaped prices, production, investment, and trade.

Amsden describes several parts of this process. In one, the military government immediately gained control over the financial system by nationalizing the banking system and requiring government approval for foreign loans. Since only those firms politically and economically responsive to government initiatives received low cost loans, credit allocation became a powerful instrument of state policy.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the state used this control over credit to make exports of light manufactures the engine driving the economy. Then, in the 1970s, a change in state policy, not private capital initiatives, shifted industrial priorities: heavy and chemical manufacturing production began to drive the economy. The state, using a complicated system of subsidies and licensing, even determined which firms would export and/or import and their product



# BOOKS

## LEARNING FROM SOUTH KOREA

by Martin Hart-Landsberg

*Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* by Alice H. Amsden. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. 379 pp. \$29.95.

Alice H. Amsden's new book, *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*, is a useful corrective to mainstream misrepresentations of South Korea. Although Amsden, who is no advocate of socialism, agrees with the majority of economists that South Korea is a success story, she forcefully shows how South Korea's experience represents a refutation of neoclassical free-market theory.

This argument is important because capitalist ideologues, surveying the worsening conditions for the majority of people in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia, claim that the cause of these world economic problems is "socialism"—governments interfering with the smooth workings of the market by regulating trade and capital flows, shaping investment and production decisions, and influencing labor markets. The superiority of capitalism, they argue, is demonstrated by the performance of the Asian "newly industrializing countries"—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

Of these four, South Korea has received perhaps the most attention and praise. Even socialist countries such as China, the Soviet Union, and Hungary have sought to learn from its experience. Superficial analysis suggests that South Korea's record economic growth and industrial transformation stem from free-market forces and international comparative advantage. Pointing to the 1987 presidential election (the first direct election in 16 years) some analysts

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convention." In this way the PT guarantees a reversal of the pyramid with the institutionalization of a party structure *pela base* (from the base).

Although many problems arise from inefficient distribution of materials, lack of experience in running assemblies, and myriad other constraints, the organizational structure ensures constant discussion of issues and a high degree of participation in all matters relevant to the party, its programs, platform, and candidates for public office.\* The top leadership's wishes are often reversed by the "pre-conventions." In 1988 São Paulo delegates nominated Luiz Erundina for mayor instead of Congressman Plinio de Arruda Sampaio who was Lula's and the São Paulo Executive Committee's preferred candidate. The same thing happened at the 1989 national "pre-convention" choosing the vice-presidential candidate. The majority of top leaders, including Lula, campaigned for Fernando Gabeira, president of the Green Party, but delegates, nonetheless, chose João Paulo Bisol, a southern senator of the Brazilian Socialist Party, who had won public recognition for his pro-worker activity during the Constituent Assembly.

Within the PT, internal democracy is exercised through a complex system of proportionate voting in "pre-conventions." The membership of the PT includes people of a variety of political ideologies: progressive members of the Catholic church, progressive Protestants, members of Marxist-Leninist groups, ex-members of armed struggle organizations, former members of the Brazilian Communist Party, independent socialists, Trotskyists, and members of social movements without any particularly defined ideology. Members form a number of well defined groups known as *tendências* (tendencies). They present documents for discussion during *núcleo* meetings and all "pre-conventions." The *tendência* which has the majority of the

\*In *Change from Below*, Margaret Keck discusses the complaints of many members of the PT about the malfunctioning of the *núcleos* and, particularly, of the inefficient system of distribution of party documents. I believe that the latter has been the most important problem for the implementation of *núcleo* participation policies. It is indeed difficult with limited resources to distribute materials throughout Brazil. There is much recent debate in the PT about the need to decentralize the production, printing, and distribution of materials to the district level to increase efficiency.



membership's participation is the *Articulação* comprised of trade unionists, Catholic church and Protestant militants, and independent socialists. There is an array of other *tendencias*, mostly those which come out of various Trotskyist groups. All documents presented by the *tendencias* are discussed and voted on. During the municipal, regional, or national "pre-conventions" the *tendencias* organize their own slates and compete for the vote of the delegates. The party posts at all levels are decided on the basis of proportion of votes.

There is much complaining among the smaller *tendencias* that the procedures do not work properly. They claim that the majority imposes its viewpoint and makes it difficult for minority documents to be properly distributed. Members of the *Articulação*, the majority group, on the other hand, say that the Trotskyist *tendencias* organize themselves as a "party within the party," meet before the conventions, and engage in gerrymandering techniques to make sure that their small numbers will count more when the votes are taken.

The question of obedience to party decisions and party platforms, once they are formally established, has also become a source of growing tension between members of *Articulação* and the Trotskyists. Sometimes the smaller groups set off on their own to carry out policies which were specifically defeated in the open assemblies of the party's "pre-convention." This practice has led to a recent debate in the PT over mechanisms to enforce party discipline.

As the PT has gained experience—and political power—the question of the participation of members in the making of public policy has become a crucial issue which has fomented bitter party debates. It is one of the PT's most cherished conceptions that its administrations shall institutionalize mechanisms for direct popular participation in the decision-making process of government. The PT program calls for the formation of citizens' committees, elected by direct popular ballot, concerned with specific issues, such as education, health, and transportation. These committees are to work directly with the city government to formulate policy and decide matters of budget in their area of concern. In addition, the PT calls for the

contrast between labor mobility in a society pledged to the maintenance of full employment and a labor market dominated by the reality or imminent threat of mass unemployment.

### In Memory of My Unforgettable Uncle and Friend

## Jacob Morris

"Intrepid, Faithful, Noble  
Protagonist of the Proletariat"

Born in New York City, December 7, 1908

Died in New York City, July 23, 1990

Mr. Morris was a frequent contributor to *Monthly Review*, particularly on the subject of inflation.

D.P.G.



substance of the analyses advanced in our two-part article on *perestroika*, we welcome the opportunity to explain more fully some points that may not have been presented clearly enough.

(1) Turgeon and McIntyre object to our stating that growth rates declined significantly in the three decades preceding Gorbachev, when according to them average annual growth rates "rose slightly," in 1966–1970 (Plan VIII). While the official Soviet data do show a rise in growth rates in that plan period, there is considerable dispute among economists as to the reliability of the official data because they do not take into account a hidden inflation factor. Our formulation was based upon the work of Soviet economists who have been trying to arrive at more realistic estimates of growth rates. But would accepting the official Soviet data about a slight rise in 1966–1970 affect the gist of our analysis of the developing economic crisis? Even the "optimistic" official data reveal a drop of almost 50 percent in the growth rate of national income between 1961–1965 and 1981–1985.

(2) Our correspondents properly point to the likelihood that crude death rates may be an unreliable measure. In fact, we noted that "part of this increase [in the death rate] may be due to the aging of the population." But, as we suggested, there is much more involved here, considering, for example, the decrease in life expectancy of males. More to the point are data supplied by Soviet statisticians for what they call the "able-bodied population," which covers men 16–59 years old and women 16–54 years old. The death rate of this population sector increased significantly: from 4.0 per thousand in 1970 to 4.7 per thousand in 1985.

(3) We are warned about the statistical pitfall in the data concerning infant mortality, since "it is entirely possible for the infant mortality rates to fall in all of the Republics . . . and the aggregate infant mortality rate for the USSR to rise." This is certainly true: it would reflect the very sizable differences between the much higher infant mortality rates in the Central Asian Republics and the lower ones in the European parts of the USSR. Major differences of this sort are due to equally major differences in the availability of proper nutrition for pregnant women, sanitary conditions, proper prenatal care, as well as the quality of other medical services. In other words, the statistical issue reduces itself to one that further underlines our discussion of the persistence of underdevelopment alongside the positive economic achievements of the Soviet Union.

(4) Our difference with our correspondents on the labor market may be a matter of terminology. As we see it, there is a whale of a

election of the popular councils in neighborhoods as auxiliary representative organs to help make and oversee the implementation of policies.

The formation of this institutionalized direct-participation program blurs the boundaries of party participation. Some members of the PT argue that the citizens' committees and the popular council should be, in essence, organizations of the party itself to institutionalize membership participation in the government's decision-making process. Virtually all the mayors who were elected by the PT have resisted this understanding of popular administration. They are supported by many members of the party in their argument that once they are elected to office as mayors they are sworn to represent *all of the people* of the particular city—not just the membership of the PT, and cannot allow the popular councils and citizens' committees to become exclusively controlled by the party. This interpretation views the process of popular administration as implanting institutionalized mechanisms for *popular participation in government*, direct citizen-government relationships not mediated just through one political party. Because of the political power implications, this issue has become the source of the most bitter divisions and intra-party struggles in all city administrations of the PT.

### Conclusion

The *Partido dos Trabalhadores* was born from social movements. It is deeply interconnected with grassroots and working class organizations both in urban and rural areas. However, social movements in Brazil are determined to keep an autonomy vis-à-vis political parties. The *Central Unica dos Trabalhadores* (CUT), which represents 15 million workers, for example, maintains a close relationship to the PT but is not monopolized by it. In some regions—e.g., Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul—Brizola's PDT holds a hegemonic position with the CUT.

Social movements which are not only of the working class but are concerned with a specific issue—e.g., the women's movement, the black consciousness movement, the environmentalist



movement—organize autonomously outside of the PT. Members of these movements have a double militancy, permeating all levels of the PT and exerting considerable influence to determine party program and draft government policy. The PT, in its brief existence, has already elected three women as mayors of extremely important cities (São Paulo, Santos, and Fortaleza) and the first black congresswoman in Brazilian history. The presence of these movements, interconnected to the PT, has enabled the party to make some innovative proposals and pass progressive legislation and also affected the new constitution of 1987. The movements *shape* the policies of the PT but maintain a position of independence and autonomy vis-à-vis governments.\*

The decentralized party structure of the PT is consistent with the political principle of democratic socialism because the means are just as important as the ends. It is impossible to build a democratic and socialist society on authoritarian structures of organization. One of the main aspects of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* is the richness of discussions, debates, and the competition between different *tendências* within the party. The PT, however, has not altogether solved the problem of exercising party discipline. It is generally held that once a decision is reached on a major policy or strategy all *tendências* should respect it, defend it publicly, and organize in a unified manner. This has not always been the case and, at times, specific groups set out on their own, causing a great deal of difficulty for the PT and its elected representatives alike. The question of how to enforce party discipline without falling into rigid regulations of "democratic centralism" has been one of the major problems of the PT.

Perhaps the most important historic role of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* has been the empowerment of the working class in Brazil. Paulo Freire, one of the PT's most influential members, often reminded us of the negative aspects of the oppressor's

\*For details of the PT's relationship to social movements see my forthcoming article: "The Workers Party of Brazil: Building Struggle from the Grassroots" in William K. Tabb, editor, *The Future of Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990).

ancy, the German Democratic Republic's crude death rate is higher than that of the USSR because it has an older population. The increase in Soviet infant mortality is partly due to statistical weighting problems or changes in the structure of where the births take place. It is entirely possible for the infant mortality rates to fall in all of the republics (as they did in most of the European republics after 1974) and for the aggregate infant mortality rate for the USSR to rise. Infant mortality rates and fertility rates are both still much higher in the Central Asian Republics than in the European parts of the USSR. Although both have fallen from earlier days, the statistical result is that each year a higher percentage of births occur in the republics with higher infant mortality rates.

On the subject of markets, MR claims that "in planned societies of the Soviet type, on the other hand, only the first of these functions (distribution to consumers) is entrusted to the market (again with modifications), while the other two are for the most part discharged by executive organs of the state (presumably guided by the planners)." The "other two" include deciding how much individuals and groups get paid for their labor. While the Soviets, following dogmatic Marxism, maintained that there were no "labor markets" under socialism, this is nonsense since wages were used to get workers to go down into coal mines, into Siberia and the Arctic, etc. The very high labor mobility rates since the Second World War indicate that there has been a seller's market for labor—something very different from the buyer's market under capitalism—but a "market" nevertheless. We don't deny that our labor market during the Second World War was a market, even though it differed greatly from the typical buyer's market. The fact that the Soviet Union followed an incomes policy from the end of the Second World War until quite recently whereby money wages increased less than labor productivity may limit market forces but it doesn't mean that there are no labor markets operating in the USSR.

It is not for nothing that many Soviet citizens now view the Brezhnev years as something of a golden age. During that period, living standards and allocation of resources to agriculture both rose significantly, reversing the investment priorities of Stalin's period.

#### THE EDITORS' REPLY

We appreciate receiving these comments from two friends who are specialists on Soviet-type economies. The points they make are primarily technical. But even though these do not bear on the



consciousness upon the oppressed. People who are oppressed may come to view themselves through the eyes of the oppressors and, therefore, feel devalued, without their own voice and power. The decentralized structure of the PT has enabled millions of oppressed people in Brazil to participate actively in discussions, recover a sense of self-worth, exercise their individual voices, and as a consequence, become empowered. This empowerment allows the oppressed to take history into their own hands and believe that, collectively, they are capable of transforming the political, economic, and social structures which oppress them. This has been a revolutionary transformation of truly historic dimensions and is the PT's most lasting contribution to the liberation of the working class in Brazil.

The experience of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* in Brazil is perhaps important to other nations as well. First of all, it is significant that a political party, born from a grassroots social movement, could maintain an overall democratic structure sufficient to ensure its dynamic flexibility while, at the same time, not losing sight of the ultimate purpose of a political party: winning political power. Albeit the PT still has many problems to resolve, its experiences in the exercise of political power have been enormously innovative and encouraging. By attempting to put into practice the theory of participatory democracy, the PT has broadened the conception of representative democracy through the incorporation of direct participation in public policy. In addition, the PT's conception of democratic socialism opens new arenas for the debate on workplace democracy, worker control, and worker-government relations. As Lula said, with a smile, in answer to a question by his opponent in a televised debate during the presidential campaign: "The PT feels very comfortable with the events in the Soviet Union. It has been practicing *glasnost* from its founding days, well in advance of Gorbachev."\* Finding different solutions to questions of political power, discovering new mechanisms for the incorporation of citizens in

\*The PT, it might be added, was the first major party of the left in Latin America to support Poland's Solidarity.

## COMMENTS ON "PERESTROIKA AND THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM"

by Lynn Turgeon and Robert McIntyre

The recent two-part article on "Perestroika and the Future of Socialism" (MR, March and April 1990) has some questionable remarks on Soviet development. According to MR, "the growth rate began to decline rather precipitously from one five-year-plan to the next throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and the first half of the 1980s." While growth declined precipitously during Plan VII (1961-1965), it rose slightly in the following Plan VIII. The Plan VII period was adversely affected by the echo effects of the baby bust during the Second World War, while the growth rate in Plan VIII benefitted from the postwar baby boom. The sharp decline in Plan VII was also related to the drastic increase in military spending by Khrushchev in response to his confrontation with Kennedy in Vienna and the loss of the advantage of secrecy as our "spies in the sky" forced upon the USSR real increases in military spending.

According to MR, "the declining rate of growth in employment is hardly a full explanation of the downward trend in the national income growth rate that began in the late 1950s. Theoretically, an increase in labor productivity could have made up for a lag in labor inputs." This reminds me of a similar Soviet retort to my (L.T.) 1959 prediction (in testimony before Congress) that the Soviet growth rate would slow down as a result of the Second World War baby bust. Increases in labor productivity are themselves the result of the availability of new labor inputs since capital per worker, which is the principal explanation for increased labor productivity, is a function of the new labor inputs.

Crude death rates are poor measures of health. What is needed is age-adjusted death rates. Despite having a much longer life expect-

Lynn Turgeon teaches economics at Hofstra and Robert McIntyre teaches economics at Smith.



public policy-making, putting into practice ideas of internal party democracy, implementing alternative developmental and economic programs in government, serving the function of administrator, mediator, and educator of the population in important issues—in all of these areas the PT's experience has helped develop new modes of social and political organizing.

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acquire knowledge and to save the world from ignorance, fear, and poverty. In fact, the primary cause of poverty in the third world is not the absence of European science but its presence: its monolithism or refusal to tolerate other ways of knowing and its tendency towards centralization and technological solutions which disempower community people—especially women who are the primary farmers. Thus, the Green Revolution with its miracle seeds produced more food but it also produced more hunger because the power structure depended on outside experts rather than on the socially-embedded knowledge of the people for decisions about land use and credit. Eighteen to twenty million people (mostly children) are still dying of starvation every year because food was grown for export rather than for the needs of the people, agriculture became petro-dependent, and small farmers were displaced by large landowners. (See *World Hunger: Twelve Myths* by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins)

Unlike European science other ways of knowing are not monolithic. When third world people at the local community level are empowered, when their immanent knowledge or culture is no longer deemed inferior, they are able to walk on two feet. They can use both the methods of traditional agriculture (which often involve a much deeper ecological understanding of the way the world works) and those of European science to develop appropriate technology.

The good news is that this is beginning to happen. Faced with devastating starvation and environmental degradation, local communities all over sub-Saharan Africa are forming self-reliance groups to eliminate hunger and save their environment by diversifying cereal, fruit, and vegetable crops, and building community fields, village granaries, and anti-salination dikes. No one knows how many groups there are; in Kenya alone figures of 16,000–25,000 groups have been quoted. The size of the groups varies enormously; 15–20 in some cases; 100–200 in others; but everywhere women are in the majority. (Pierre Pradervand: "Subsaharan Africa Taking Off Again," *Development Forum*, May/June 1988)



is of limited value for the ordinary needs of large numbers of people. The development of science, and the use of technology under the control of a society fit for human habitation, does offer hope.

### GRACE LEE BOGGS REPLIES

Michael Green's response is very welcome because it provides an opportunity to pursue questions about the scientific paradigm which have been too little discussed in socialist circles.

Green admits that there is "some truth" in my linking of European science with its capitalist origins, but he does this so grudgingly that he misses completely the political significance of the connection.

Scientific rationalism was established in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe through the counterrevolutionary suppression of peasant revolts and witchhunts in which an estimated one million people were tortured and killed. As I said in my article, "Just as the peasants had to be forced off the land through the enclosures, so that it could be turned into private property and they could 'freely' sell their labor power to the capitalists, the immanent method of knowledge of women and those close to nature had to be discredited and driven underground through witchhunts, so that it could be replaced by the scientific rationalism of the professional intellectual."

Through this counterrevolution local communities were disempowered. The popular concept of nature as alive was replaced with the mechanistic view of the world as composed of dead, inert particles. Immanent knowledge, or the knowledge that people in village communities had accumulated over the centuries, was branded as evil and inferior to the abstract knowledge of the "community of scientists." This immanent knowledge had not been written up in scientific journals but that doesn't mean that it was private. Embodying the concrete social experiences of local communities over many generations, it could be shared and evaluated. It was both personal and political. But, unlike European science, it accepted the concept of mystery, i.e., that there are limits to what we can know.

With so little understanding or appreciation of this kind of knowledge, it is not surprising that Michael Green slips back so quickly into the Eurocentric illusion that science is the right way to

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Grace Lee Boggs is co-author, with James Boggs, of *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (Monthly Review Press, 1974). She is a member of the coalition exploring alternatives for the revitalization of Detroit and the editor of the SOSAD (Save Our Sons and Daughters) Newsletter.

## CUBA: A LEFT U.S. VIEW

by PAUL M. SWEETZ

The economic crisis in the Soviet Union and the collapse of Communist-controlled regimes in Eastern Europe have left Cuba in a dangerously exposed position. The hostility of the United States—and to a lesser extent of other advanced capitalist countries—toward revolutionary Cuba forced that country to become heavily dependent for trade and aid on the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies. Now that this relationship is weakening and may even be altogether cut off, the future of Cuba can at best be described as full of difficulties and uncertainties.

The general view in the United States, all but universally reflected in the U.S. media, is that Cuba is a Communist dictatorship similar in essentials to the failed regimes in Eastern Europe and that Castro's downfall is only a matter of time, after which Cuba, in response to the presumed wishes of its people, will be welcomed back into the U.S.-dominated "family" of American states.

This view is fundamentally flawed for a number of reasons, all of them important and mostly forgotten or overlooked in the excitement of recent events. (1) Cuba, unlike the Eastern European countries, had its own, entirely home-grown, revolution. The Soviet connection came later and at no time negated Cuba's national independence. (2) From the beginning nationalism, perhaps the most important political force in the world today, has worked to strengthen the Cuban Revolution in

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This piece was written for a progressive Italian publication.



contrast with the diametrically opposite effect in Eastern Europe. (3) Standing up to the United States brought Cuba and the Cuban Revolution a vast amount of sympathy and popular support throughout Latin America and to a lesser extent in other third world countries, a factor that has complicated U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba and render it vulnerable to international pressures. (4) Finally, judged by third world standards which are not generally applicable to Eastern Europe, the Cuban Revolution has yielded impressive advances to the Cuban people in such areas as social equality, nutrition, education, and health. It is true that these gains were made possible by Soviet aid, but the point is that Cuba, unlike most third world recipients of foreign aid, has been able to use the aid to strengthen the nation and uplift its people rather than enrich and consolidate the power of a small oligarchy.

There is one further factor that sharply differentiates Cuba from the Eastern European countries. In modern times Cuba, like most other countries in the Western Hemisphere, has had a racially mixed population—consisting, in the Cuban case, of a majority of European descent and a minority of African descent. Before the revolution the mix in Cuba was comparable to that in the United States, and the racial stratification was also similar, with whites monopolizing positions in the economic and political power structures and blacks generally consigned to the lowest class positions. Thirty years after the revolution, this has radically changed. The large-scale departure into exile of middle- and upper-class whites and greatly improved health conditions for the lower classes, have transformed the demographic profile of the Cuban nation. Today the country is estimated to be 58 percent black; and blacks, benefiting from revolutionary policies and the urgent need for educated and trained personnel resulting from the white bourgeois exodus, have moved into positions of responsibility and influence throughout the state structure right up to the top levels. This has been especially true of the military which, with Cuba facing the constant threat of U.S. invasion, has steadily grown in importance in Cuban society during the

largely used in the service of capitalism is hardly a surprise in this world. Very little of significant value is not so used, at the moment.

Moreover, scientific knowledge is public; in a society in which education was generally available, scientific knowledge would be equally available. Even as it is, this knowledge can be independently evaluated. It remains to struggle for the ability to make the knowledge available to all in fact, as it is in principle.

There is a second point to consider. Science, through technology, has irreversibly transformed the world. The world's population has become at least ten-fold larger than it was at the start of the industrial revolution. This may not be a good thing, and it clearly has had some rather disastrous consequences, with more likely to come. However, if we decide to abandon modern technology, we will kill off most of the present human population, generally through the consequences of immiseration—starvation and disease. This can hardly be an acceptable or humane way to deal with the problem we face. (We literally cannot *entirely* abandon technology and remain human; hominids were using tools even before modern humans evolved.) There is obviously a great deal wrong with modern agricultural technology, with the ways in which we produce energy, the ways we use energy, and with many other technologies. However, this is not the same as saying that we must give up a large fraction of our present knowledge, or the means of acquiring it. For example, if we are to cure the excess of carbon dioxide and other gases responsible for the greenhouse effect in the atmosphere, while still providing for even the minimum energy needs of as large a population as the world now has, we will require elegant technology. We cannot accomplish a return to an ecologically viable earth without either a drastic drop in the world's population, extreme impoverishment of at least a large majority of the population, or use of new energy technology, including solar and conservation technology. Some of this is in principle simple, relatively low tech, like solar cookers; some, whether we like it or not, is highly sophisticated. Even solar cookers are not entirely simple, while other forms of "appropriate technology" require a fairly deep understanding of the way the world works—which is what we mean by science. This understanding is acquired by rational means.

It is simplistic to call for methods of acquiring and distributing knowledge appropriate to the feudal system to avoid the evils of capitalism. Science has in fact been largely captured by capitalism; so has much of the rest of modern society. We can surely do better; knowledge of the kind Boggs discussed may be real, but even if it is, it



# CORRESPONDENCE

## WE DO NEED TECHNOLOGY: A REPLY TO GRACE LEE BOGGS

by Michael E. Green

Grace Lee Boggs (MR, February 1990) attacks the practice of science as inherently Eurocentric, irretrievably linked to capitalism and imperialism, and necessarily estranging us from each other and from our planet. There is some truth in this; science did grow up in Europe, clearly linked to the development of capitalism and imperialism.

However, the general sense of the article is that science is not the right way to acquire knowledge, and that the knowledge acquired through science is necessarily tied to the kinds of uses which have been made of it in the past. Science is, if not necessarily entirely reductionist, certainly materialist. However, the knowledge is not therefore invalid. Boggs has not made clear what, if anything, would be an appropriate method of acquiring knowledge, or whether acquiring knowledge is a valid activity—although she does mention the “immanent” method of knowledge of women.” The problem with any “immanent” method of acquiring knowledge is that it is necessarily private. It is hard to see how it can be taught, or shared, except by being simply announced, so that it cannot be understood or publicly evaluated. It is also apparently impossible to add to it; at least, during the centuries when such methods of acquiring knowledge were accepted, there is little evidence that any part of this knowledge could be built upon, or that there was any organized attempt to do so. The shared nature of scientific knowledge is the essence of its cumulative character, and therefore of the power of which Boggs speaks; for any one investigator, scientific work may be slow, but the community of scientists together moves fairly rapidly.

The fact that science can be shared means that it is not tied to its origins. Already science is not limited to Europe. The fact that it is

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revolutionary period. Moreover, within the military the weight of blacks has increased more than proportionately with Cuba's successful assumption of a major role in protecting liberated Angola from South African counterrevolutionary aggression.

The point of the foregoing recital is not to argue that the Cuban Revolution—any more than Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union itself—has produced some kind of a model socialist society. From a socialist point of view, there is much to criticize in Cuban society, most importantly that it is not democratic and after 30 years shows no signs of evolving toward democracy—using the term in its authentic Marxist sense of a society in which the associated producers are in charge of their own lives and destiny. This is not the place to analyze the Cuban political system: suffice it to say that it is a variant of *caudillismo*, a very old and familiar Latin American institution in which supreme power is concentrated in a *caudillo*, or chief, who maintains his position through a mixture of patronage and repression. This is a form of government that corresponds to an underdeveloped, semicolonial society in which most of the population is impoverished and illiterate. This was indeed the situation in prerevolutionary Cuba, and Fidel Castro's rise to power followed a pattern that has been repeated many times in Latin American history. The difference, of course, is that Cuba's new government, fired by twentieth-century revolutionary ideas and ambitions (anti-imperialist, socialist, Marxist), embarked from the outset on a course of radically revolutionizing Cuban society. This in turn activated the United States and the Soviet Union, the one in opposition, the other in support, and each in pursuit of its own global interests at a time when the Cold War was rising to a new pitch of intensity.

In these circumstances of profound domestic and international turmoil, the Cuban revolutionary dictatorship became more and more deeply entrenched while adding new features borrowed or adapted from the Soviet Communist model and/or the U.S. national security state. To all of which must be added the by-no-means-negligible weight of Fidel Castro himself,



one of the twentieth century's most charismatic, successful, and durable political leaders, and one who has remained in his personality and style of operating the old-fashioned *caudillo* who rose to power at the head of a guerrilla army on January 1, 1959.

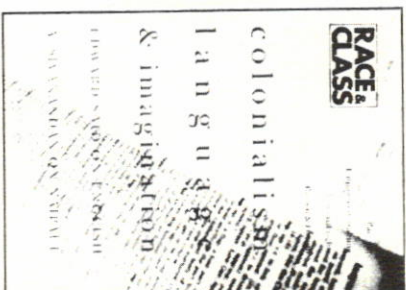
Cuba thus presents the strange paradox of a country that in terms of social and cultural achievements has risen far above its prerevolutionary third world origins, while its form of government has changed very little in a period of three full decades. Civil society, in today's fashionable jargon, has advanced enormously, and the horizons and ambitions of the popular masses have greatly expanded. At the same time their freedom to act, the scope for creatively utilizing their new capabilities remain hemmed in by what remains in effect a political straitjacket.

As a result Cuba undoubtedly suffers from a deep malaise, but it is of a different kind from that afflicting Eastern Europe. There disillusionment with the consequences of the long period of Communist rule has been quite general; the desire to escape Soviet control and recover national independence is strong even if it means accepting the restoration of capitalism; the beneficiaries of social reforms like full employment, free education, and comprehensive social security have shown little inclination to fight to retain these gains. In Cuba on the other hand, where attachment to national independence is at least as passionate as in Eastern Europe, everyone knows that the collapse of Communist rule would bring back the ultra-rac-tionary Miami exiles and would mean the restoration of Cuba to the status of a U.S. neo-colony. For many and above all for the black majority of Cubans that would quite literally mean a fate worse than death. Under these circumstances, the chances of the Castro regime being overthrown by an internal uprising can only be described as vanishingly small.

What about a U.S. invasion on the model of Grenada and Panama? Here we can let William Raspberry, a black columnist of the Gannett newspapers in the United States, have the last word. "Any attempt to invade Cuba," Raspberry wrote in

ism, and paternalism are replaced by mutual recognition, collegiality, and equality. Such an endeavor by necessity involves a questioning of Western-centric scientific paradigms, a receptivity to a pluralism of knowledge, and a reconstitution of core values.

To do all these things, we might look and learn from Eastern Europe. It is time for a cultural revolution in the United States. It is time for a U.S. version of *perestroika*, a thorough-going restructuring. It is time for a U.S. *glasnost*, a fundamental questioning of the status quo. It is also time for us to tear down our own Berlin wall, the wall of racism which both dehumanizes peoples of color and denies us all our own humanity.



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segregation, and repression that, unfortunately, are not yet dead history.

Of course it is a step forward that we are holding forums, recognizing the unacceptable uniformity of most of our faculty, and making an ethnic studies class a requirement for general education.

But we also need to confront issues that are much more profound and much more difficult. What needs to be addressed is the legacy of a worldview that sees a particular white, Western, and predominantly male vision of culture as the ultimate arbiter of civilization. What is at stake here is our common humanity, our outlook on knowledge, our vision of the future. We need to be thinking about what it will take to prepare our students and ourselves for our roles as citizens of a world in which our many pasts and our many possible futures are equally celebrated and respected.

An ethnic studies requirement, as I said, is a step forward but there is a danger that it will get reduced to a technical and discrete topic that needs to be mastered or appreciated in the same way that we might learn French or read Tolstoy. Or worse that it gets seen as a brief and all too easily forgotten exercise in consciousness raising.

As Martin Bernal (in his important book *Black Athena*), Samir Amin, and other third world intellectuals have pointed out, we need to challenge what Amin calls the "mythic construct" of Eurocentrism, namely that view of world history as a linear progression from the Greek and Roman classical world to Christian feudalism and European-based capitalism. It is a construct which does not respect the contributions of a multiplicity of civilizations from the past, notably Afroasiatic cultures from the east in general and Egypt in particular. We need in its place a new history, a new philosophy, a new social science, a new liberal arts that helps us to envision a genuinely universal world that incorporates on an equal basis varying conceptions of human, political, and economic development.

This will require a profound change in the composition of student and faculty bodies. It will also require the construction of a truly multicultural environment in which exclusion, token-

his column of March 23rd, "would be an all-out disaster . . . not because black Cubans are necessarily pro-Communist but because they are nationalist and optimistic regarding their prospects under the present regime."

He might have added that Cuba, unlike Grenada and Panama, has a powerful and battle-tested military force at its disposal, and that the outbreak of a Vietnam-like war in the Caribbean could not but have profound repercussions throughout Latin America and in the United States itself.

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Let me give you a typical example. For five years from 1922 to 1927, Frazier built and directed the Atlanta School of Social Work, the first of its kind in the South. In these five years, he administered the program, taught classes, did fundraising, wrote and published some 33 articles, wrote short stories, and a play, started a French club on campus, painted water color portraits, and had his photographs published in several journals. The unique social-work program that he developed does not appear in any history of social work. His contribution, as Sheila Rowbotham has said of women, was "hidden from history."

In fact, I do not know of any textbook or monograph on the history of social policy and welfare in the United States that makes people of color active participants in the construction of history. At worst, they are totally ignored; at best, they are treated only as victims. I do not mean to discount their victimization. But, as Wendell Berry has noted, "plunged into a misery without any preparation that could have helped them even to imagine it, these people made in themselves an astonishing endurance, a marvelous ability to survive." Where, I would add, is the history of that survival, that strength, that resilience and struggle?

When Frazier is remembered, it is as a "leading Negro sociologist" or "black expert on race relations." He hated that academia put him in this box, albeit a distinguished and decorated box. It also happened to Oliver Cox, a leading theoretician who didn't get any kind of serious recognition until after his death. And of course the prime victim of this kind of exclusion and prejudice was W. E. B. Du Bois who, as long as he lived, was recognized as a "Negro leader," a "Negro activist," and, begrudgingly, as a competent "Negro intellectual." Only twenty years after his death does the academic establishment begin—and I emphasize begin—to recognize his contributions as a leading American intellectual of the twentieth century.

As we listen to the grievances of hundreds of people on this campus and consider curriculum and other reforms, we need to keep in mind these institutionalized structures of exclusion,

## COOKING THE BOOKS: THE PERILS OF PUBLISHING

by MURRAY L. BOB

The returns are in: the definitive lists of 1989's bestsellers have been posted in the bible of the book industry, *Publishers' Weekly*. Perusing these tables, I was overcome by a strange feeling that took me a few minutes to identify. The symmetry was perfect—or perhaps I should use William Blake's word, "fearful." In each list one book stood out as an undoubted work of quality and a perfect oddity, considering the company it kept.

What did Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* have in common with Hawking, *A Brief History Of Time*? Both were "difficult" books, unlikely to be read through by any but the most patient, persevering, and knowledgeable reader. How did they get onto this list of pot boilers, formula fiction, diet, exercise, and cookbooks, spy, success, and (ghosted) celebrity confessionals?

To ask is to answer: They made it to the bestseller lists despite their undoubted merit, not because of it; they got on because their authors had become celebrities in spite of themselves and not for the usual reasons. Rushdie, the victim of a latter-day Inquisition, has been condemned to death as a heretic and forced to go into hiding. Hawking, almost totally immobilized and without speech is the genius victim of a particularly hideous and incurable disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Both are prisoners for life, one of his own body, the other of a medieval force which can, ironically, best be charac-



in 1936 for organizing an essentially academic conference on "The Position of the Negro in Our National Economic Crisis." Between 1944 and 1956, he was regularly identified as a "communist sympathizer" in the endless lists issued by the House Un-American Activities Committee. In 1955 he appeared as a generally unfriendly witness before the Senate's Internal Security Committee, chaired by Mississippi's James Eastland, who regarded Frazier as the "chief brainwasher" of the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Frazier paid a price for refusing to bow to the pressures of anti-Communism, in particular for his loyalty to and respect for Du Bois and Paul Robeson, both of whom were hounded in the 1950s for their progressive politics. In the last years of his life, he was offered an important appointment by UNESCO to head up a major project on the state of race relations in the world. He needed a security clearance, and the FBI and State Department made sure he didn't get it. The State Department sent him an interrogatory asking him, among other things, for a complete history of his contacts with sixteen people, four of whom he had never even heard of. Another allegation was that "in or around September 1958 your name, position and address were given by one Soviet diplomatic official to another as the author of books on Negro questions."

He later wrote to a friend that he was going to launch a campaign against the FBI and to let his academic colleagues know that he had been "subjected to a lot of foolishness initiated by policemen." But by this time he was quite sick and demoralized. Whether or not his death by heart attack a few weeks later was accelerated by this experience with the FBI is pure speculation, but it can't be ruled out.

(4) My fourth and final point again concerns *exclusion* but this time with respect to *ideas and history*.

One of my reasons for writing about Frazier is to recognize his contributions and to put him back into our collective memory. Frazier's work—and the work of countless Afro-American artists, writers, and intellectuals—has not been taken seriously. This is another form of racist exclusion that is very much a fact of academia today.

terized as satanic. These books made it on bestseller lists otherwise bereft of the slightest distinction because of their authors' unwonted and unwanted celebrity.

In a way, this strange conjunction is, perhaps, the most telling commentary one could make about the parlous state of trade book publishing in America today. I say "perhaps" because it happens that the same week that *PW* released its bestseller lists witnessed the shameful dismissal of Andre Schiffrin from the position of editor-in-chief of Pantheon, the publishing house he had headed with such distinction for 28 years. Schiffrin brought the works of Gunnar Myrdal, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Boris Pasternak, Mary Renault, Gunter Grass, Marguerite Duras, John Berger, R. D. Laing, Anita Brookner, Fay Weldon, Eric Hobsbawm, E. P. Thompson, Noam Chomsky, Ariel Dorfman, Ralph Nader, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Studs Terkel to American readers.

All of the above are writers of distinction, withal of varying kinds, with something both unique and important to say—and all of them say it in their *own* voice; all contribute something of significance to the stream of ideas and values that nourishes the modern mind and heart. To summarily fire the man who gave us such writers immediately strikes one as an act as crude as it is barbarous.

I do not know Mr. Schiffrin and have no connection whatever with him. Yet I feel I owe him a debt of gratitude and perhaps will be forgiven a momentary personal comment in order to explain. I have been selecting books for public libraries for about 37 years. In the course of my career, I have probably been more or less responsible for the purchase of seven to eight million dollars worth of books. It's not that simple to choose 8,000 titles from among the 50,000 or more hardcovers published annually in the U.S. by the book trade. Not only are many books unreviewed, reviewed too late, or poorly reviewed; not only are many fine works unadvertised and unpromoted, but they—the good ones—tend to go out-of-print before you can place an order. The converse is equally true and compounds the problem: an increasing amount of schlock gets published which receives an increasing share of the publisher's



advertising dollar—and (not accidentally) virtually all of the attention of the media. By and large, the rule holds that the better the book the less it is promoted and the more unlikely it is for the author to have appeared on the innumerable talk shows that clutter the early morning and late-evening hours of television's day. Important works, if they are not sensational, lurid, confessional, or written (ostensibly) by celebrities are seldom attended to.

Thus the library selector and the common reader have the same problem: they hear, read, and see entirely too much about junk books and entirely too little about quality books. How wonderful, then, to have had a publishing imprint like Pantheon whose name virtually guaranteed distinction, an imprint on which you could *rely*. Whether or not one agreed with the viewpoints expressed in their books (very often I did not), one knew they would be backed up with, but not overwhelmed by, substantial documentation and reasoned argument. The imprint at its best stood for high intellectual level without pedantry and for stylistic excellence both in fiction and non-fiction. Pantheon addressed important public issues and left formula fiction, quick fix, and instant success books to others.

I am sorry to see Schiffin go because he made my life easier. But I am sorer to see him go because he enriched and deepened the intellectual life of the nation.

Why was Schiffin fired? No one directly involved is talking, but neither does anyone deny that the Newhouse Communications conglomerate (it imposed silence on all parties) which bought Random House of which Pantheon was one very small, very independent piece—withal the most prestigious piece—was unhappy with the number of allegedly unprofitable or minimally profitable titles it published and with the fact that much of what it published was critical of establishment practices and policies. A brief note on the last point first: the anti-establishment tenor of Pantheon came with the territory; it was Pantheon's trademark from the start. Founded in 1942 by refugees from Nazism, Helen and Kurt Wolff and Kyrrill Schabert, who were joined a year later by Schiffin's father Jacques, Pantheon couldn't help but be and

young black intellectuals, writers, and artists who made a pilgrimage to Europe or Africa. Langston Hughes crossed the "big sea" for the first time in 1923; Countee Cullen took his first of many trips to Paris in 1926; Du Bois, who had studied in Germany in the 1890s, visited the Soviet Union in 1926; Frazier visited Denmark and France in 1921.

This was not simply a desire to travel and see the world. It was primarily an effort to escape what Du Bois called the "color line"—that "peculiar sensation" of a "double-consciousness" or "twoness," a "sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks in amused contempt and pity." Going abroad was a form of voluntary exile that continued long after the 1920s. At least through the 1960s, many talented Afro-Americans—such as Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Sidney Bechet, Wallace Thurman, and Paul Robeson—found that they could practice their craft and be treated more seriously outside this country. Frazier's most controversial book, *Black Bourgeoisie* was first published in France in the 1950s, and a few years later James Baldwin had to find an English publisher for *Giovanni's Room*. As late as 1961, Du Bois left the country for good. He was 93 years old and he preferred to die in Nkrumah's Ghana than live under constant harassment in the United States. Frazier in a sense followed Du Bois's act of defiance when he bequeathed his own vast library to Ghana after his death in 1962.

Meanwhile, most black intellectuals remained in the United States and were able to start finding jobs in the North in the 1950s and 1960s. While they were able to escape the daily violence of the South, any black intellectual who was in any way critical of racist policies or of U.S. domestic or foreign policy found himself or herself targeted by intelligence agencies. As early as the 1930s, as we know from Kenneth O'Reilly's important study, every leading civil rights and black political organization had been covertly infiltrated. In the 1940s, J. Edgar Hoover used the pretext of the Second World War to launch a nationwide investigation of what he called "foreign inspired agitation [in] colored areas and colored neighborhoods."

Frazier first came under investigation by security agencies



poet Countee Cullen taught high school in New York rather than teach at a university in the South. "I would rather be anything, no matter how menial, in New York," he wrote Frazier's wife in 1931, "than to be anything, no matter how elevated, in the South where neither mental nor material elevation is a protection against insult and assault."

But most intellectuals like Frazier headed south where, at least through the 1950s, they lived with the regular danger of violence and in an omnipresent atmosphere of racist degradation. In order to survive in Atlanta in the 1920s, Frazier published some articles anonymously, changed his pen name from Edward Frazier to E. Franklin Frazier, and even used a French title to disguise an important but controversial article. It made no difference. He was fired for refusing to take orders from a subordinate white faculty member and, to add injury to insult, was literally chased out of Atlanta by the Klan after the local press revealed that he was the author of an article that analyzed white racism as a form of mental illness.

When he came back to the South to teach at Fisk in the early 1930s, little had changed. One time a lynching party came on campus, took their victim several miles away where they shot him, dragged him behind a car, and hung him until he died. On another occasion, the dean of women died after a car accident because the local hospital was for whites only and refused to admit her. In 1934, Frazier attended a luncheon for University of Chicago alumni held at prestigious Vanderbilt University in Nashville. He knowingly joined his colleagues in the whites-only cafeteria. "Some of the people at the table appeared to be paralyzed," recalled Frazier. "I saw some stare and drop their forks and spoons. The man who was in charge of the cafeteria seemed panic stricken." The next day, the president of Vanderbilt called the president of Fisk to express his outrage at the incident. He said that it was "the most disgraceful thing that had ever happened on the Vanderbilt University campus." He said that Frazier "had polluted the campus."

That was Frazier's last job in the South.

This kind of repression drove many educated Afro-Americans out of the country. In the 1920s Frazier joined a cadre of

never was anything except critical and questioning of the conventional pieties. Of course some might say: all honor to its critics who help a democracy perfect itself.

Andre Schiffrin joined Pantheon in 1962, after it was acquired by Random House and, one year later, at age 28, he became editor-in-chief—a position he retained until he was fired. A rarity in contemporary American publishing, he was a cultivated individual who spoke six languages. That the gigantic, \$10 billion Newhouse empire couldn't handle the insignificant losses or negligible profits allegedly incurred by its tiny \$20 million subset, Pantheon, (given what it gleaned in positive publicity from the international distinction of the imprint) seems almost beyond belief. In any case, no one has seen or will be allowed to see the balance sheets that prove losses, and there are some insiders who say there weren't any. Creative accountancy, of course, can show losses or profits at will by simply changing the position of numbers on the page and does so for any of a number of reasons. So, there is likely to be more than a grain of truth in the suspicion widely held in the book trade that Schiffrin's dismissal is censorship by another name.

Nevertheless, a counting house mentality has invaded book publishing to an extent never before seen. This is a function of the kinds of people now hired—B-school types increasingly—and, more importantly, of the new pressures generated by vastly increased industry concentration. Everyone is aware of how enormous international media and other conglomerates have been buying up almost all independent trade book publishers who own a profitable backlist or have a stable of successful authors. Less well understood is how they do this and the consequences of this as well as of the concomitant Waldenization of the book distribution apparatus.

Many fine old book publishing houses did not want to sell. Stockholders and/or management finally succumbed to well-nigh irresistible (even legally irresistible) offers. Buyouts achieved through overpayments ultimately had, in their turn, to be paid for. How were the mountains of debt supposed to be handled? By focusing almost single-mindedly on the publication of bestsellers.



Bestsellers have been around since time immemorial. But the pressure to identify, publish, and market them is now greater than ever. Enormous, absolutely unprecedented advances are paid to supposedly sure-fire successful established writers and celebrities. The advances negotiated for the likes of Tom Clancy, Danielle Steele, and Stephen King are so big they are virtually irrecoverable—but the bidding wars make them increasingly common. It is, for example, rumored that King received a \$40 million advance for his next four books. Since the net sales of the *entire* industry in 1988 were \$3 billion, the absurdity of advances of such magnitudes is self-evident.

The same concentration characteristic of book production now also defines book distribution. Suburbanization brought with it the so-called malling of America. Waldenbooks, Dalton, and a very few other book chains are located in very high-traffic shopping centers. The good news was that hundreds of thousands of new buyers who may never have ventured into a bookstore before started to buy books. The bad news was that this new public bought along well-grooved mass consumption lines. They purchase books by names made familiar through advertising or through appearances on TV talk shows; they buy gift books rather than "good" books; they buy books that will make them "feel good about themselves" or tell them how to achieve happiness, success, wealth, and endless automatic orgasms in under two minutes; they buy books (ostensibly) authored by ex-politicians and their wives, mistresses, and masseurs, by and about sports, movie, and rock stars, etc.

The very heavy demand for a relatively small number of titles generated by the mall stores forced publishers to overprint. Since it is impossible to gauge in advance how many copies of a title will be sold, the chain stores order vast quantities secure in the knowledge that unsold copies are returnable to the publisher for full credit. This worked for a while, but now that the mall business in general is topping-out, the problems generated by massive overprintings and return rates that normally exceed 30 percent have become almost unmanageable.

None of this was supposed to happen. Instead, the predict-

extraordinary variety of repressive constraints experienced by black intellectuals throughout most of this century. This is necessary partly in order to guard against their recurrence, and partly in order to appreciate how much Frazier's peers accomplished against enormous odds. I do not invite pity here but rather respect for their enormous strengths. As the anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston put it, do not treat [me] as "tragically colored. . . . No, I do not weep at the world. I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife."

From the 1920s through the 1960s, Frazier learned to appreciate the difference between the ideal and reality of academic freedom. In the 1920s, the handful of black graduate students were on display, so to speak, and subjected to constant scrutiny and evaluation. In order to get their degrees they had little choice but to endure a paternalistic atmosphere and racist ideologies. Frazier's experience was quite typical. At Clark University, he studied with the social psychologist G. Stanley Hall and sociologist Frank Hankins, two of the leading "scientific racists" involved in constructing theories of racial differentiation. Hall, the president of Clark, was one of the country's most distinguished academics, the founder of the psychology laboratory at Johns Hopkins and the founder of the *American Journal of Psychology*. It was this same man of distinction who noted that the demise of slavery had unleashed "imperial lust" and made blacks into such barbarous rapists that no white woman was "safe anywhere alone day or night."

Hankins, who supervised Frazier's master's thesis and was his main advisor, doubted that "there could be found any pure negroes who, if brought up under the most favorable circumstances, could develop the intellectual powers necessary to carry on the higher cultural activities of the country." No doubt this was why the president of Clark University characterized Frazier as "mentally white" when he gave him a reference for a university job.

Prior to the Second World War, black intellectuals who couldn't get a job at Howard or could not survive economically in Europe had the choice of going south or taking jobs in the North for which they were overqualified and underpaid. The



1941, to be "an artist, writer, or scientist. In the United States he is always a 'Negro artist' or 'Negro scientist.'"

Any Afro-American who aspired, like Frazier, to be a serious intellectual fought immense odds. They had to do their writing under conditions of heavy teaching loads, low salaries, inadequate libraries, and minimal encouragement. Prior to the civil rights movement, most were tracked into teaching at colleges where the emphasis was on industrial education, character development, and preparation of students for what was called a "Christian life." Thoroughly disillusioned with a lifetime of segregated intellectual work, Frazier observed just before his death in 1962 that aspiring black intellectuals probably had more encouragement in the nineteenth century from the Northern white missionaries than they did from professional educators in the twentieth century.

(3) Thirdly, I want us to remember the legacy of repression that Afro-Americans inherit from our very recent past. Frazier may have been sufficiently conventional to become the first black president of the American Sociological Association, but there was hardly a period in his life when he was not subject to harassment or humiliation by university administrators, boards of trustees, racist organizations, right-wing politicians, McCarthyist inquisitors, or the FBI.

It is true that Frazier was an activist intellectual, interested in socialism and social equality. But he was never a member of a left-wing party and he generally kept his distance from organizational politics. He primarily expressed his militancy in the combat of ideas. Yet for his 40 years in academic life, he constantly lived and worked in an atmosphere of repression. He was not alone. This was true for any academic who in any way challenged the racist status quo. A black intellectual who aspired to be a scholar prior to the Second World War experienced, in the words of John Hope Franklin, the "most shattering and disturbing sensations as he looked about him in an attempt to discover one indication of confidence, one expression of faith in him and his abilities. If he doubted himself, it would be understandable. . . ."

It is important for us to remember and to understand the

ed scenario was: the conglomerates buy out all the mom and pop publishers run by unworldly scholar types, who are immediately given the sack and replaced by legions of lean and mean young hotshots sporting MBAs, accounting, auditing, financial, marketing, and public relations degrees. And these heavy hitters were, unlike the English majors they replaced, going to bring in the big bucks. The problem, as anyone who has had experience in the book industry could have told them, is that selling books is not like selling burgers. Fifty thousand book titles is one thing; half a dozen styles of burgers quite another. The mechanical application of the same techniques that worked with the selling of the latter to the sale of the former just won't do. A burger is a burger is a burger—as one author might have said. The same is not true of books.

When the crisis came for the conglomerates neither the overpaying for the business, the overpaying of big name authors, nor the overprinting of schlock were seen as the problem. Instead the unbusinesslike practices of those who are actually interested in and may even know something about the product they are trying to sell is allegedly the problem. That is why Schiffrin and his like get expelled by the penurious popes of publishing. The marketing mavens have to have a scapegoat and they are not about to offer themselves up for this role, however richly they merit it. That's not what you are taught to do in the business schools that increasingly disfigure the academic landscape. The irony is that cutting the quality end of the business won't do a damn bit of good since that's not where the problem began or where it grew, and since what there is to cut in these outposts of quality is, from a financial point of view, inconsequential.

It may be that book publishing is inherently a "cottage industry"—at least by conglomerate standards—and that firms content to work within reasonable profit parameters, firms that don't sell out (literally and figuratively), firms that are not *obsessed* with the publication of bestsellers or *exclusively* focused on them can still do well *enough* (a word virtually unknown in the citadels of high finance). Farrar, Strauss, Giroux and Norton are examples that immediately come to



mind. These houses have substantial and impressive backlists from which they derive continuing if not lavish income; they do not have to make up for imprudent buyouts; they do not pay absurd author advances, and they do not support (in a manner to which others should never have become accustomed) layer upon layer of parasitic executives, accountants, PR-types, marketing mavens, and other go-go guys and gals.

To return to Pantheon: It's hard to find a name that stands for something—other than the making of a quick buck, no matter how. The Schiffrins of this world ought to be honored and treasured. Instead, they are fast becoming extinct. If this is a problem in other areas of the national life, it is particularly troublesome in publishing—for books are virtually the last bastion of *considered* thought.

I don't say that critical thought finds no outlets. It does. But these are ever fewer, narrower, and more likely to be overwhelmed by the torrents of trivia and trash that flow endlessly from the mass media of which conglomerate book publishing is now a part.

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It is important to remember that at least through the Second World War, black colleges in the United States operated on a system of apartheid. Their students were exclusively black and from the 1920s onward the faculty was increasingly Afro-American, but self-determination went no further than this. They were governed by white boards of trustees, dominated by conservative business and religious representatives. Typically, the president was a white minister. As an undergraduate at Howard from 1912 to 1916, Frazier for example was required to attend chapel every day; any female professor who married after her appointment was automatically fired; and courses on Afro-American and African history were not permitted.

When Frazier went south to teach at Tuskegee, the headquarters of Booker T. Washington's political base, he found greater humiliations and constraints than he had ever found at Howard. Tuskegee was a combination of British boarding school and Marine Corps camp—military drills as well as religious services were obligatory; tobacco and alcohol were prohibited; dating was chaperoned; mail was opened and censored. There was even a separate residence and dining hall for white guests. Once, Frazier was reprimanded by a dean for carrying too many books under his arm when he walked through the campus. He was told that white visitors would get the wrong impression that Tuskegee was "training the Negro's intellect rather than his heart and hand."

On another occasion he took a bale of hay into his classroom. He was teaching algebra and was told by his superiors that he had to give all that he taught a very concrete, practical application. A student asked him why he had the hay in his classroom. "Prof, you never use it," said the student. Frazier replied, "It's for the asses in here to eat," and continued with his lecture. Frazier didn't last long at Tuskegee.

Segregation also put limits on what intellectuals could research or write about in the twentieth century. Until quite recently there was no freedom of academic inquiry for black academics. Most were forced to specialize in "Negro studies." It was impossible, observed Frazier after a visit to Brazil in



groes from white universities and their superior facilities for teaching and research."

After the First World War, prestigious universities began to recruit a small number of carefully selected black American students into their graduate programs. It was not a matter of social equality nor even benevolence. Concerned by the volatility of race relations and the increasing militancy of the "New Negro," business and political leaders looked to higher education as a way of coopting future black leaders. They hoped that Frazier and his peers would steer an alternative course to the Afro-American socialism espoused by the Socialist and Communist parties and the Pan-Africanism of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Armed with their Ph.Ds from prestigious universities, most black intellectuals headed south. They had very little choice if they wanted to teach college. There were no academic jobs for blacks in white universities, and the only black college hiring social scientists in the North was Howard University in Washington D.C. As late as 1936, for example, more than 80 percent of all Afro-American Ph.Ds were employed at three black universities—Atlanta, Fisk, and Howard. It was not until 1942 that any major university hired a full-time, tenure-track Afro-American professor and even through the 1950s most black intellectuals could only find jobs in Southern colleges. "Whenever the door was opened," recalled John Hope Franklin on the basis of his own experience, "It was done grudgingly and the opening was so slight that it was almost impossible to enter."

Despite Frazier's brilliance, he was never able to escape the constraints of a segregated educational system. Aside from his three years of graduate study at Clark and Chicago Universities, he never worked in an integrated college during his regular academic career. His elementary, high school and undergraduate education all took place in segregated schools. He taught only at black colleges and was never offered a ladder position at any established university. Yet he was good enough to head the American Sociology Association and to be appointed to a high-level research position with UNESCO in Paris.

## RACISM IN ACADEMIA: LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

by ANTHONY M. PLATT

My comments today reflect work I have been doing on the life and work of E. Franklin Frazier, Afro-American intellectual, sociologist, and activist who lived from 1894 to 1962. I will use his experience to make some general observations about the recent history of racism in academia, particularly with respect to racism against black students, intellectuals, and academics. (This does not pretend to be a systematic assessment, but rather a starting point for studies that remain to be done).

I recently received a letter from Alex Haley (who was on our campus as a visiting scholar). A couple of sentences from this letter provide a fitting context for my talk. Haley had been informed that some professors were hesitant to invite him to our campus on the grounds that he was not "sufficiently scholarly." This attitude, according to Haley, "is not without precedent, I can assure you. It is my impression," he writes, "that academia contains some of the more grudging folk in this world. With no disrespect whatever to the institution of academia, I counted one of my luckier things that I did not become a scholar, as my professor father very strongly intended."

Today I want to discuss this notion of academia as

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"grudging" and try to explain why somebody as celebrated, as literary, and as intellectual as Alex Haley counts himself lucky not to be an academic.

First, a few words about Frazier. He was born in Baltimore to a working-class black family in 1894. He was a "war baby"—abroad, the U.S. was imposing military solutions on Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines; at home, racial violence was widespread, with 135 lynchings in 1894 alone. He was part of that generation of activists who after the First World War would come together from vastly different regions of the country to form the cutting edge of a social, political, and cultural movement that would irrevocably change conceptions of race and the politics of race relations. Frazier was a member of the generation of "New Negroes" born at the turn of the century who in the 1920s would forge a "Negro renaissance." His contemporaries included Ralph Bunche, A. Philip Randolph, Elijah Muhammed, Marcus Garvey, Claude McKay, Paul Robeson, Zora Neale Hurston, Sterling Brown, Arna Bontemps, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Richard Wright.

Frazier's education was typical of this group—a segregated elementary and high school in Baltimore, an undergraduate degree at all-black Howard University (1916). Over the next several years he was all over the South, teaching in black high schools and black colleges, notably Atlanta University, Tuskegee in Alabama, and Fisk in Tennessee. In the early 1920s Frazier earned a Master's degree at Clark University in Massachusetts and his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1931. In 1934, he took over the sociology department at Howard University and remained there almost until the end of his life in 1962.

Despite relatively little support for his research and a full teaching load throughout his life, Frazier managed to produce 8 books and over 100 articles. He is best known for *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939) and his other studies of the black family, in which he focused on the material roots of its instabilities and "disorganization." He was the first social scientist to systematically demonstrate that the internal prob-

enduring component is the *process of exclusion*. Frazier's generation was born into impoverished conditions, an atmosphere of racial violence, and a segregated and thoroughly inferior system of public education; consequently, most bright black students were quickly and irrevocably tracked out of higher education and into dead-end jobs.

This exclusion was systematic and enduring, lasting throughout Frazier's lifetime. As a teenager walking to high school in Baltimore, Frazier had to pass by Johns Hopkins University. "I would stop," he recalled, "and make a point of spitting on one of its buildings because I knew that I could never aspire to enroll there." It was rare for his generation to make it into college, much rarer to get a higher degree. Prior to the First World War, only 14 Afro-Americans in the United States received Ph.D. degrees. This number increased to only 51 by 1929 when Frazier was working on his doctorate at Chicago.

The civil rights movement and subsequent civil rights legislation of the 1960s of course increased the participation of Afro-American students and faculty in academia, but the same structural conditions still prevail. Today, with over one-third of the black community living below the poverty line and sending their children to increasingly segregated and impoverished schools, it is not surprising that students here complain about a lack of faculty diversity or that the doctoral program in social work at Berkeley has had one black student in 13 years or that there are more black men in prison than in college.

We are not even close to solving the problem of *physical exclusion*.

(2) Secondly, institutionalized racism has been built on a *process of segregation and exclusion within academia*. For those few who like Frazier somehow made it through high school, through an undergraduate degree, and through a graduate program, racism operated to restrict employment opportunities, intellectual resources, and areas of academic specialization. "Until relatively recent years," wrote historian Michael Winston in 1971, "a virtually impermeable racial barrier excluded Ne-



stagnant too long. Most universities have done too little too late to incorporate multicultural requirements into their general education programs. And after a period of growth and vitality in the 1970s, many ethnic studies programs suffered cutbacks and ideological attacks. Books that were widely read in the 1970s—the *Kerner Report*, the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets*, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois*, Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*—are hardly known today. For many, the civil rights movement is dead history, or else what they know comes from commercial culture, such as the diabolical revisionism of a movie like *Mississippi Burning* where the FBI is portrayed as the backbone of the struggle for justice and Afro-Americans are reduced to passive victims, bit-players of history who, according to Hollywood, know only how to sing, pray, and suffer.

Universities are not exempt from the new racism. Quite the contrary. We study, work, and teach in an institution that is neither neutral nor an ivory tower. The anti-Vietnam war movement taught us a great deal about academia's active participation in the military-industrial complex and its complicity in the Cold War. As historian Ellen Schrecker has documented in her important study of universities in the 1950s, the academic establishment also accommodated itself to McCarthyism with, in her words, "extraordinary facility.... The academy did not fight McCarthyism," she writes. "It contributed to it... [and] behaved just like every other major institution in American life."

Similarly, it is our responsibility to ask ourselves: when it comes to racism, does the academic community behave just like every other institution in American life? After all, the new racism doesn't usually wear a sheet and carry a club. It's more likely to be dressed quite stylishly and it wields a pen, even sits at a computer.

Since a racist society by necessity has a selective memory, it is time to remind ourselves of what needs to be confronted and transformed:

(1) Institutionalized racism in academia operates at several different but interconnected levels. The first and most

lems of the Afro-American family were socially created within and by "Western Civilization," not by the failure of Africans to live up to American standards.

After his death and in the wake of the *Moynihan Report* (1965), Frazier was accused of initiating a pathological and reified interpretation of the black family. This judgement was primarily based on Moynihan's selective and deceptive quotations from Frazier's work written 26 years earlier. Frazier was highly appreciative of the toughness, ingenuity, and resilience of the black family in all its variety and complexity. He believed that an essential aspect of the struggle against racism was the defense, assertion, and reproduction of cultural integrity in the face of a society whose "greatest crime of the age" was the "denial of personality to the Negro."

Frazier's expertise on the black family, plus his relationship with the University of Chicago's powerful department of sociology—which after the First World War set the standards and direction of the profession for at least two decades—no doubt played a critical role in his election as the first Afro-American president of the American Sociology Association in 1948. But he brought a great deal more to sociology and intellectual life that went unrewarded and unrecognized. His 1949 textbook—*The Negro in the United States*—was the first of its kind, a challenge to conventional "social problems" texts which "usually treat Negroes as atomized individuals 'floating about' in American society." Unlike most of his peers who succumbed to Cold War pressures, he brought to sociology an interdisciplinary perspective and in this respect had much in common with the Marxist critique of sociology. His 1957 study of *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World*, for example, was at the cutting edge of progressive scholarship with its effort to understand the political economy of racism in a global context. His *Black Bourgeoisie* (1957), based on a lifetime's concern about the impact of class on politics and culture, was a savage demystification of the "myth of Negro business." Moreover, Frazier grappled with the political role of intellectuals and the relationship between ideas and activism long before it became fashionable.



Frazier's generation of Afro-American intellectuals were the pioneers who broke through some of the racist barriers in academia and set the stage for the activists of the 1960s and 1970s who created a space for ethnic studies programs. Now that those gains are under attack, it is worth reminding ourselves of the legacies of institutionalized racism that have been given a new lease on life in the 1980s.

Today, many of us feel a sense of despair (and of *déjà vu*) at the slow pace of achieving social equality in this country. We need to remind ourselves, however, that the struggle against racism as a *national commitment* is in its infancy. We are barely at the crawling stage.

It literally took hundreds of years to publicly recognize that racism *damages* human beings. It was not until the 1944 Myrdal Report—a nationwide study documenting the atrocities and immorality of racism—that institutionalized racism was really given any credence in the arena of public opinion. Even so, its findings were shelved and mostly forgotten by policy makers.

It would take the civil rights movement of the 1950s to put racism back on the political agenda and another decade before the Supreme Court and Congress would pass legislation against legal forms of segregation in public institutions. Still, *de facto* racism persisted and in the early 1960s Northern ghettos exploded with unprecedented and unexpected rage, announcing to the world that racism was not simply a problem of the past nor only of the South.

In 1968 President Johnson's Kerner Commission issued a report which restated much of the Myrdal study but stunned public opinion with its conclusion that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal. . . . Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American."

In the early 1970s there were some small but encouraging successes—development of affirmative action policies, recognition of ethnic studies as a legitimate scholarly enterprise, government funding of community-based social programs, to

name a few. As we begin the 1990s—knowing now that social gains, once won, are neither guaranteed nor permanent—we realize how small and precarious these victories were.

The 1980s did not see a closing of the two societies identified by the Kerner Commission. The possibility of a cultural revolution quickly faded. Instead we witnessed policies of benign neglect, a deepening of economic polarization, a growth of mean-spirited racism, and a resurgence of volatile and antagonistic race relations that recall the pre-civil rights era. The retrenchment of the last decade is not unlike the Jim Crow backlash that followed Reconstruction.

Recently on this campus we have heard an unprecedented outpouring of anger, bitterness, broken promises, and humiliations (as well as a new-found strength and determination). Taken separately each racist incident appears isolated and personal—an encounter with a rude and insensitive professor; words of offensive graffiti on a toilet wall; a police stop of a "suspicious-looking" car full of black men; a look around her room by an Afro-American graduate student to find only a sea of white faces among her classmates; a 400-page textbook (required in a *graduate* social work class on welfare policy) which devotes only ten pages to racism and still manages to reproduce racist caricatures. The book notes that Chinese-Americans have a penchant for "in-group living patterns" and that Asian immigrants have been relatively successful because they believe in hard work—implying that Afro-Americans, Chicanos, Latinos, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans believe in what? Laziness?

When we see these separate incidents in their totality and understand their accumulated impact, then we know that racism is much more than a problem of rotten apples or bad attitudes, much more than a matter of personal ignorance or malice. Then it becomes an institutional and structural problem—deeply embedded, persistent, experienced, and skilled in its resistance to change.

And it is not just a problem of this campus.

The 1980s have seen, for example, a decline in black college enrollment. Affirmative action in university employment reached a low plateau in the early 1980s and has been